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NOVEMBER 1952

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SOCIAL ACTION

VOL. 2 No. 8

NOVEMBER 1952

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HERE AND THERE

Starting Anew

The Village Uplift Movement is on. It was solemnly launched on Gandhiji's day with a bout of spade work by the Prime Minister. Mr. Nehru has done his share, setting up of the Planning Commission, checking and revising the plans, forming a Ministry of Planning, and giving the all-clear signal to the workers. It is hoped that he will not be called away from his all-India tasks to go and inaugurate this or that community project; he should not be turned into a "play-boy" as he said when called upon to open sundry factories and laboratories. *Ne sutor infra crepidam.*

The work is now in the hands of all the officials and volunteers at state, district and village levels. The officials are there to give explanation, and guidance and to sanction detailed plans and expenses. The volunteers should regard it as their main task to supply the villagers with incentive and example. In the long run self-help is the only help that is effective. Here is the rub; our peasants are slow-witted, depressed and discouraged. It will take weeks and months to rouse in them the desire and the hope of self-improvement. For centuries any individual improvement

made them an easier target for exaction by petty officials and from friends and relatives. A common effort and progress might, however, cure them of their diseased psychology, though a diseased mind is what is most difficult to cure.

It was right to have the plans associated with Mahatma's memory. But was it sound psychology to begin the hard work of the community projects with a public holiday?

Merciful Bombay

The Bombay State boasts of being as progressive as its capital, and its legislation is not shy of bold experiments. It has acquired a reputation for austerity, but it knows when to temper severity with suavity. Prohibition remains in full force; yet allowances have recently been made for the weak. The plans for jail reform reveal a like trend towards benignity; they are discussed with the modern preoccupation of rehabilitating the actual criminal rather than deterring the potential offender. The most interesting experiment which is proposed permits smoking in the jails.

We are so systematically taught that tobacco is at best a useless weed that it is surprising to see modern state authorities favouring the spread of this myterious craving of mankind. Some opponents of Bombay Government even suspect the measure as part of a subtle campaign against smoking. Prohibition of alcohol could rest on a strong Indian tradition, backed by religious and social sentiment. Smoking could invoke the practice of many a professional ascetic or mystic. Were smoking to become associated with jail birds, it might turn into something as disreputable as drinking, and once the prejudice would be firmly established, it would serve as a platform for an all-out offensive against the wretched weed. Such subtlety, however, is hardly within the ambition of day-to-day politicians. The only consolation left at present to the inveterate smoker is to reflect in all humility that the weed is helpful in rehabilitating criminals.

Man vs. Machine

The handloom industry is going through a crisis. Mr. Rajagopalachari proposed that it should be given a quasi-monopoly in some types of dhotis and saris. At once capitalists and economists flared up: "the handloom is symbolical of stagnation and poverty; the mill industry is dynamic and dynamism is what the country wants. This may look cruel but it is scientific economy." Which argument points to a dangerous psychology, the psychology that our economy should be dominated by money and machinery. This upside down mentality must be set right. The human person and human values should be given priority in our industrial policy; as Gandhiji said repeatedly, cottage industry is the only social institution that will save the rural masses and the country. The handloom may be improved, it may be speeded up with cottage power, but the cottage-scale of production is precious beyond computation.

Progressive Madras

Welcome news comes from Madras. Public interest in social sciences is waxing strong. The government still feels shy of new academic ventures, but private initiative has already started two centres for social teaching. A recent conference of Catholic Principals studied the problem in a spirit of idealism tempered with stern realism, and it is expected that next year several centres will be opened for different branches of social teaching and endeavour. The results will take some years to be tangible and tangibly appreciated; but from now on since expert educationists have taken up their share of the task, social workers are free to explore fresh avenues and address themselves to other tasks which are possibly more humble and more urgent.

In a few years' time, Catholic India will be truly social-minded.

A. L.

THE PROBLEM OF INDIANS OVERSEAS

The Satyagraha movement in South Africa by the Indian and African communities in protest against the racial policy of the Government of Dr. Malan, has focussed the attention of the whole world on the menace of racialism on the African Continent. However the spirit of racial discrimination which is so crudely manifested in the apartheid policy of the South African Government is present in lesser measure and in less offensive ways in many parts of the world, and not least among those who have expressed their sympathies for the South African Satyagrahis in an emphatic manner. The proposed discussion of the South African situation in the General Assembly of the United Nations this year will undoubtedly help to draw the attention of the world to all aspects of the problem, and to all the regions where in a greater or lesser degree it threatens the cause of harmony and peace among nations. In particular it will have to be studied in the context of the overflowing populations of Asia,—of India and Japan in particular, and the prospects of peaceful and fruitful emigration into the vast empty regions of the world which a selfish policy based on fear and egoism, keeps closed to these industrious populations.

To India in particular, the South African crisis is only one item in the bigger problem of Indians overseas, of their status and prospects, of their relation with the mother country and of the inevitable repercussion of these questions on her foreign policy in general. Few people realise the extent of the movement of "colonization" as we may call it, by which India in recent days has resumed her role of ancient times of going beyond her frontiers, and building up thriving communities in many quarters of the globe. It is only now that the people of India begin to realise the extent of the oversea settlements, the variety of the condi-

tions in which they find themselves, and the problems that confront them there. There are flourishing Indian communities in the West Indies—in Jamaica, in Trinidad, in British Guiana mainly, and also in smaller numbers in the islands and coastlands of the Caribbean sea. They are about 1,80,000 people of Indian descent in Trinidad, about 30,000 in Jamaica, more than 100,000 in British Guiana where they are nearly one-half of the population. In other parts of the world too there are almost equally impressive figures of Indian colonists. The South African situation is of course well known. There are numerous agriculturists of Indian descent in Madagascar. The great majority of the population of Mauritius is Indian, numbering over a 100,000. The Indian workers and settlers in Malaya number several hundred thousand. There are large numbers in Ceylon, in Burma, in Fiji. There are smaller communities in other parts of the world including America and Canada. At a conservative estimate there must be about a million and half people of Indian race in lands beyond the seas.

Most of these settlers went overseas as humble labourers, often in conditions which amounted to a mild form of enslavement. Our readers will remember that the liberation of "indentured labour" was one of the planks in the programme of the Congress in earlier years. As long as India was under the political domination of a foreign power the status of Indians overseas was not an acute problem in most places where they had settled down. Only the more glaring instances of injustice or of human treatment provoked the educated sections in India to indignant protests. With the growth of the national movement these protests took the form of specific demands and led to political pressure through the British Colonial Office, on those who were exploiting the Indian worker. In most of these colonies the Indian labourer had been called in to save agriculture which was threatened by the absence of native labour or, as in the West Indies, by the refusal of the liberated slaves to continue to work in the plantations. Little by little these groups of modest and industrious workers who had often

no means of returning to India, settled down, in some cases secured grants of land and obtained elementary civic rights which had been refused to them in the first instance. Mahatma Gandhi's Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa was the first great landmark in the struggle of Indians overseas for full citizenship rights and the recognition of their place in the political set up of the countries which they had made their homes. That fight ended in a substantial victory on South Africa and great amelioration of the colonists' conditions in other lands. It brought out the decisive role of the Government of India in defending the rights of these people of Indian origin.

With the Independence of India, there is a new phase in the relations between the mother country and these children beyond the seas. They naturally experienced a sense of exultation in the emancipation of the mother country and they hoped that their status in their new homes would be raised and that the fight for securing such rights as were still denied to them would be taken up by a powerful and respected Indian Government more effectively than by the British Rulers. In certain cases there were attempts to return to India by those who had left her shores in times of economic difficulty and who believed that under Indian rule they would not only be welcome back to their motherland but would share in the economic prosperity and social emancipation which Swaraj was bound to bring. India therefore faces, the difficult task of meeting this double claim, namely of effective protection by international and diplomatic action against injustice and facilities to return when it is desired. Independent India has not taken much time to define her attitude clearly and tactfully in the face of this problem.

There can be no doubt that these men and women of Indian origin are citizens of their adopted lands who have contributed greatly to the prosperity of these new homes of theirs. Moreover they are regions where for the most part there are unoccupied or sparsely populated areas which

offer to the industry and above all, to the agricultural skill of our people an admirable opening and ensure for them a greater degree of prosperity and well being than would be possible in the conditions actually obtaining in India. Hence the natural attitude to adopt towards these children of our race is to advise them to secure the rights and privileges which should be theirs in full measure by virtue of their citizenship. The example of an unquestionable patriotism and the determination to contribute to the progress of these lands by the exercise of their traditional virtues will secure for them before long not only recognition, but a prominent part in the government and the public life of the colonies. India's right to intervene on their behalf by diplomatic action in the United Nations Organization or with the Colonial Governments, would be based upon fundamental human rights to which the United Nations Charter and their covenants have given a new force and primacy. That right is reinforced by the natural desire and admitted responsibility of India to come to the rescue of people of her race and culture to whom these fundamental rights are denied.

To claim this indirect protection from the Mother country does not in any way compromise the loyalty which they owe to their own country. They seek a legitimate means by which that new country of theirs might become so completely theirs that their attachment to it might be without reserve and regret. Such ties based on community of race and culture is an admitted element in international life and causes no political difficulties elsewhere. It binds the many millions of the children of the Irish race for example to their distant motherland with a love which matches in fervour and devotion the love of the actual inhabitants of the Emerald Isle. It does not compromise the patriotism or the civic loyalties of the many millions of people of Irish descent in the United States or Australia for example. It binds the children of Spanish motherland with the same enduring ties whether they be citizens of Mexico or one or other of the South American republics. These

racial and cultural ties on the international plane and on a worldwide scale help to bring scattered areas of the world closer and foster international contacts.

It was my good fortune to pay a visit to two of the most prosperous of these overseas Indian communities and come to know their spirit and attitude to the mother country by personal experience. Last April I spent a few days in Jamaica and Trinidad and had opportunities of meeting representative groups of the Indian colonies there and address them at various centres. It is not easy to speak without emotion of the warmth of their welcome and the pleasure they experience in welcoming visitors from the Mother country. Nor is it easy to suppress the feeling of pride which the visitor is bound to feel when he sees the way in which these settlers, originally most of them workingmen, have taken advantage of the opportunities they secured there. They rescued the agricultural economy of the islands when they were threatened a hundred years ago, by lack of labour. They have transplanted there the vegetables, the fruit and flower trees of the Indian homeland. In Trinidad of which they form one third of the population they are an important element in the prosperity of the sugar industry and have almost the monopoly of the vegetable market. They have established schools and have made progress in education and some of them are achieving success in the learned professions. They have taken a constructive part in local politics and the Government of the island includes a Minister of Indian origin. Their pride and joy at the emancipation of India and at her growing importance in foreign affairs is manifest, and their attachment to the traditions of the old country profound. It was with pleasure that I noted that communal feelings and separatist tendencies had not weakened them as they have weakened us at home. The Muslims, the Christians and the Hindus lived on terms of amity and though attempts at causing cleavages have not been wanting, they have not succeeded to any appreciable extent.

This does not mean that they have not their problems. There is a certain number among them, though very few relatively speaking, who speak of returning to the mother country. They have still problems concerning their civic rights just, as we have them in communities nearer home, in Burma or Ceylon. But they are being handled with skill and devotion by an able and very hardworking Commissioner in the West Indies, Mr. Sahay. It was my good fortune to be able to speak to them along the lines which I have indicated above, and to feel that though some of them may have expected more dramatic results from our independence, they realised the wisdom of the policy which India has been following in their regard.

That wise and moderate policy has not been appreciated in South Africa and has not enabled us to secure for men of our race the elementary justice which all men have the right to expect from every Government worth the name. Years of patient negotiation and appeals to public opinion and repeated expressions of International concern through the UNO, have not succeeded in persuading the rulers of South Africa that they are seeking a solution of the problem of harmonious living among racially distinct groups which is foredoomed to failure. It is a solution inspired by racial pride and economic injustice. Those who struggle against apartheid laws do not do so because they want racial admixture or the lowering of the standards of a more advanced community. They want opportunities for raising their own standards so that collaboration and mutual assistance may be possible on a basis of economic equality and cultural similarity. When a bare 20 per cent of the population refuse these rights and opportunities to 80 per cent of the people in their own country, the leaders of this arrogant minority are preparing for themselves a struggle in which they will not have the last word; and what is worse, sowing the seeds of racial animosity which may cause havoc in all parts of Africa and have its inevitable and painful repercussion in all other parts of the world. notably in Asia.

The Catholic Church has condemned racial discrimination and exclusiveness in unequivocal terms. The Gospel recognises no distinction between Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian. The primitive Church preached her message and gathered her harvest in Europe, Asia and Africa. The oneness of mankind, the dignity of all human beings and their equality before God are fundamental in the Church's teaching regarding Creation and Redemption. In recent years the Church courageously opposed the racial doctrines of Nazism. Pius the XIIth in particular in his repeated declarations on the social question has recalled to all Catholics these principles of human equality, and more specifically he has spoken to the American Episcopate and the Church in America of the position of the negro and the need for solving the racial problem there in the spirit of Christian charity and brotherhood. "We confess" he said, "that We feel a special paternal affection for the Negro people dwelling among you ; for in the field of religion and education We know that they need special care and comfort and are very deserving of it. We therefore invoke an abundance of blessings and we pray fruitful success for those whose generous zeal is devoted to their welfare." (*Catholic Mind*, Vol. 38, p. 927). Moreover the Delegate Apostolic and the Bishops of Africa have on two different occasions intervened in the present bitter conflict by recalling firmly and clearly Christian principles of brotherhood and charity, of "that common fellowship which should override racial conflicts and national frontiers." The Bishops admit the presence of inequalities but they should be overcome "by a prudent and careful planning, and in the practice of charity and justice. . . . We Christians freely admit the diversity of man. For us the human race is one" (*New Leader*, 29th June 52.).

Catholics of India will watch the struggle of their brethren in South Africa and their African fellow citizens with profound sympathy and prayers for their success. They cannot but feel deeply distressed by a policy which contradicts the fundamental teachings of our religion and dis-

credits the Christian name. Their opposition to Dr. Malan and his evil policy will not be diminished by his Government's threat "that Churches and societies which undermine the policy of apartheid and propagate doctrines foreign to the nation will be checked." (Ibid). Christianity has contributed powerfully to the emancipation of the Backward classes in India. It can and will play its part in the emancipation of the non-white populations of South Africa from this latest type of "caste" exclusiveness.

J. D'Souza.



FREEDOM FROM WANT

Before the conclusion of hostilities of the second world war, there existed a growing conviction among statesmen and leaders of the allied powers, that international peace and security could never flourish in a world in which one half of humanity lived on subhuman standards of nutrition, housing, health and education. Moreover, when the shooting war came to an end, motives of self-interest not unmixed with humanitarian considerations made it increasingly clear that unless the more rich and more advanced countries helped in the economic development of the underdeveloped countries, the economic life of the former would be endangered, and long continued subhuman social and economic conditions would help spread Communism which, indeed, is the tuberculosis of all weak and diseased social organisations. Hence, by means of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations and through freely negotiated agreements between advanced industrial countries and underdeveloped countries, a number of socio-economic organisations are working in several South East Asian countries to fight poverty, disease and illiteracy.

Under Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States have pledged themselves "to promote higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social development." And as early as December 1946, the General Assembly of the United Nations "recognizing that the members of the United Nations are not yet all equally developed" asked the Economic and Social Council to "study the question of providing effective ways and means for furnishing, in co-operation, with its Specialized Agencies, expert advice in the economic, social and cultural fields to Member Nations who desire this assistance." The nature of assistance which the UN Specialized Agencies offers to underdeveloped countries was made clear by Mr. Jamie Torres Bodet, Director General of the United Nations Economic and Social Council at Geneva in July 1949. He said, "In order that those unfavoured by history and geography may catch up with the more fortunate, it is not enough to furnish them with the means of progress. They must be made capable and desirous of using them for that purpose, it must be *their* progress which is involved, and they must know it. It is therefore essential that technical assistance be closely linked with a corresponding effort to guide peoples towards an active and intelligent participation in the shaping of their own destiny as they themselves see it."

The United Nations and its Specialized Agencies did not take long to go into action to serve, in a practical manner, the actual needs of countries requesting any assistance. As early as 1947 twenty-four experts were sent to nine countries, at their request to advise them on various social welfare services, which have been provided on an ever increasing scale ever since. In October 1948, a mission of experts from the United Nations, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Monetary Fund, was sent out to Haiti, at the country's request, to survey almost all aspects of its economy and to recommend

measures for development. By December 31st, 1950, technical assistance rendered to India was covered by one housing expert and another in criminology from the United Nations; three experts from the Food and Agricultural Organisation; ten from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and five from the World Health Organisation. An interesting feature of this technical assistance programme is that while an underdeveloped country may be receiving assistance in certain fields, the country itself may be able to send experts from other fields in which the country may be more advanced. Thus in 1951, twelve experts under the auspices of the United Nations were recruited from India to work in other countries. Besides the provision of economic and technical assistance on an international basis through the United Nations Specialized Agencies, various regional technical assistance programmes freely negotiated between advanced industrial countries and underdeveloped countries aim at reducing the gap between the most and least developed countries. The most important of these are, perhaps, the American Point Four Programme, the Colombo Plan and the Community Projects.

The Point Four Programme of American aid to underdeveloped countries is essentially technical in character, and is an attempt to help the people who receive this aid, to help themselves. It was formulated by President Truman in his inaugural address in January 1949, when he outlined the four major courses of action of the United States foreign aid policy. Point Four was the fourth of these courses and aimed to give technical assistance to all underdeveloped countries. The programme is, in fact, a recognition of America's responsibility for the welfare of less developed countries, and also an attempt to share with other countries the experience gained from hard work, imagination, courage and technical skill which have led to the emergence of the USA as one of the richest and most powerful nations in the modern world. In June 1949, President Truman gave effect

to Point Four by recommending two measures : the Technical Co-operation Act (TCA) authorizing the expenditure of funds required for the execution and administration of the technical assistance programmes, and an amendment to the Export-Import Bank Act of 1946, so as to give the Bank authority to guarantee private capital from the USA, contributing to the development of foreign countries, against any risks particular to these investments. The first country to obtain a grant under the Point Four Programme for the improvement of health, agriculture, education and living conditions in villages, was Iran. In December 1950 India signed an agreement for assistance under this programme, and five projects were approved with a provisional allocation of 1.2 million dollars. Three of these projects relate to improvement of health and agriculture and have already been started ; the two others aim at developing the country's ground, water and mineral resources.

The Colombo Plan was first discussed at the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference held at Colombo in January 1950. The Plan recognized the urgent need of developing the rich natural resources and immense potentialities of South East Asian lands, and not only of those within the Commonwealth in this area. The Plan is not, and was not intended to be a programme of "free-gifts" to these countries, and so each country was asked to prepare a development programme and to assess carefully the national resources available for such development. In general terms, the aim of the Colombo Plan which covers a six-year period, may be described as an attempt to organise development in South East Asian lands so as to raise the standard of living by means of a co-operative approach to the problems of development and especially to that of increased food supply. Given the low per capita income of the peoples of these countries, and lack of technical knowledge it was evident that external assistance would have to provide a measure of financial assistance and also expert technical assistance. During the first year of the Plan financial and technical assistance was received from various Commonwealth

countries and from the USA. Of financial assistance, Australia made available, by way of grant, a sum of £A 8.75 million ; Canada agreed to provide 25 million dollars in the year 1951-1952 ; New Zealand agreed to furnish a million pounds a year during the first three years ; the United Kingdom's financial assistance has been chiefly by way of releasing sterling balances according to agreements made with the countries in the area. Technical assistance has been provided mainly in the form of scholarships, technical experts in the field of agriculture, hydro-electric power development, high-ways, railways, bridge construction, health and education.

Perhaps, the most comprehensive and ambitious Rural Welfare development programme yet launched in this country is the Community Project Scheme begun in October 1952. The term "Community Project" is of American origin and it is used in the USA for the development of a settlement which may be either agricultural or industrial. As applied to Indian conditions, the term merely refers to a group of villages making up a rural settlement, whose over all natural resources are carefully ordered and developed. "The central object of a Community Development Project" writes the Planning Commission of the Government of India, "is to secure the fullest development of the material and human resources of the area. The attainment of this object in rural areas demands urgent measures for a rapid increase in food and agricultural production. Work will also be undertaken for the promotion of education, for improvement in the health of the people, and for the introduction of new skills and occupations so that the programme as a whole can lift the rural community to higher levels of economic organization and arouse enthusiasm for new knowledge and improved ways of life." The idea and the common pattern of the Community Development Programme bear the stamp of American enterprise, and details of the scheme with respect to staff, operations, finance and work are made to conform to certain

standards. The Government of the United States of America in agreement with the Government of India undertakes to share in the financial and technical resources needed in the execution of the Community Project. Technical experts are provided through the Technical Cooperation Programme Agreement between the two Governments, and will be available at the Centre and at State levels in almost all fields of the Community Development Programme, such as, Health, Education, Irrigation and Small Scale Industries.

The Community Project Organisation functions at different levels. At the top there is the Central Organisation for the Community Project Administration with its Committee of Advisors, so that each type of operation is linked with that Ministry in the Government. Moreover, certain operations are directed by this Central Organisation, as for instance, "the running of special training centres not otherwise existing, or the running of projects in States where no suitable machinery exists for such purposes." The other sections of the Central Organisation are, the Personnel Section, the Planning Section, Finance and the Administrative Section. On the State level, each State has its own Development Committee, while each District has its own District Development Organisation with a District Development Officer.

Each Community Project is made up of the following units :

- i. A Village Unit, on an average, will consist of an approximate population of 500 distributed in about 100 families. And each village unit chosen for the operation of the project will have certain basic amenities, with regard to water supply, health, housing, education and communications.
- ii. A Mandi Unit made up of about 15 to 25 villages linked up with a common market and a centre of other activities. Such a unit will include amenities not found in the Village Unit.
- iii. The Development Block, this will be made up of from four to five mandi centres together with their satel-

lite villages. The headquarters of the Development Block is planned to be a rural-cum-urban township with an approximate population of 5,000 distributed in 1,000 families. Residential accommodation for about 1,000 families and greater amenities will be provided for in each Development Block.

iv. The whole Project Area will be made up of three Development Blocks consisting of approximately 300 villages, and its headquarters also known as an Urban-cum-rural township is planned to have a population of 10,000 to 20,000 people. Besides the common features found in the rural-cum-urban township of the Development Block, the Project Headquarters will enjoy greater facilities for health, education and rural welfare in general.

From the moment that the site has been selected and survey work begun for the project area till the whole scheme has been finalized, a period of three years has been estimated as the required time to implement the whole project.

Since every Community Project is a multi-purpose organisation, the training of its personnel covers a vast number of subjects, so that no aspect of rural life may be omitted. Thus the curriculum of the training of the Supervisory Staff in the first course just completed at the Bakshi Katalab Centre at Lucknow included such subjects as, Rural Extension Service ; Rural Life and Psychology; Preliminaries of extension activities ; Technique of supervision ; The Theory and Practice of Agriculture; Horticulture and Vegetable Gardening; Plant Protection; Agriculture engineering; Animal husbandry and veterinary ; Cottage industries ; Health, sanitation and village hygiene; Adult education ; Co-operatives and Panchayats. Besides this theoretical knowledge great stress is laid on field work or practical work by the trainees. As the Planning Commission points out, "The main purpose of our training is to change the psychology and outlook of our future workers.... We have to add practical training skill and the extension spirit to

our trained personnel... To bring this about the trainees will approach the cultivators, bring them round to try the improved activity of the day ; do it and show it in the field under their environment, with their tools and resources, and leave only when the cultivator would leave."

The very nature of these Community Projects makes more than evident that success will depend, to a very large extent, on the type of workers engaged in these Projects, and therefore, the qualifications required are of a very special quality. Emphasis is rightly placed on the importance of "personality, ability for organisation and qualities of leadership"; on the necessity of candidates for this type of work coming from rural areas; on a knowledge of a Provincial language, Hindi and English; on having been trained in Community organisation work and having had some experience of field work in rural areas.

All social workers will welcome the opportunity offered them by these Community Projects to help revitalize the Indian countryside, and dramatize for men anew, life as it can be lived at the fountain source of organic power, life on the soil. Obviously the first and most urgent need is to arouse an intelligent interest in the land on the part of all classes, urban and rural. People actually living on the farm and in rural areas must be taught to understand more perfectly the economic benefit of home productivity. The mine and factory worker must be shown the possibilities of part time farming where circumstances render that possible. City workers must be given the vision of that far-reaching organic good which comes to every nation through rural culture, co-operation in rural communities, intelligent land programmes, home production, home arts and crafts. The Community Projects will find use for every type of social worker from the university graduate to the village social worker, who by means of local study circles and field work will help re-establish healthy rural families and rural communities as living cells and members of the body politic.

C. C. Clump.



COMMUNIST POLICY IN INDIA

Last year saw much striking of breasts and expressions of repentance by the CPI (The Communist Party of India); its members had erred, grievously erred. So the Polit Bureau said and so it had been told to say and mean what it said. A firm purpose of amendment has been made and a new programme and policy drawn up.

It will be well worth while to examine the CPI's future policy. In general, it plans greater concentration on the peasantry and on agrarian reforms, a shift away from individual violence, a greater use of the middle-class bourgeoisie and a strengthening of the independence of the States from the Centre.¹ The details of this policy are very instructive and the study of them will prevent much tilting at windmills and chasing after will-o-the-wisps.

Communists will never allow that other besides themselves can interpret Communist policy; in this matter, they do not hesitate to claim the gift of infallibility. But in order to lessen the charge of 'perversion' which will inevitably be raised, we have allowed Communists to speak for themselves. Hence the large number of quotations. That the CPI thinks the plan of action drawn up in the *Programme and Policy* important can be seen from the following editorial in *Cross Roads* (Communist) August 10, 1952: "The last one year has witnessed a decisive

¹ The principle sources are:- *The Statement of Policy of the Communist Party of India*. November 1951. (Policy)
Programme of the Communist Party of India. October 1951. (Programme)

E. M. S. Namboodripad, *On the Agrarian Question in India*. People's Publishing House, Bombay, 1952. (E.M.S. Namboodripad)
S. Parameswaran, *The Peasant Question in Kerala*. People's Publishing House, Bombay. 1951. (S. Parameswaran)

change in favour of the people. The publication of the Draft Programme by the Communist Party of India proved to be an important landmark. Analysing the Indian situation with a clarity and simplicity that was never known before in our country, the document called for the broadest United Front of all democratic forces, of all anti-imperialist anti-feudal parties, organizations, groups and individuals in order to assert our national independence and democracy.... Armed with this weapon our people won significant victories in the election battle."

Agrarian Reform

In "*The Peasant Question in Kerala*" S. Parameswaran sums up the general situation as regards the peasant movement. Up to now the CPI has failed to realise that a strong movement among the peasantry would unite ninety per cent of the people. A section of the Party leadership, forgetting Stalin's teaching that "the peasantry represents the main army of the national movement" have exaggerated "the roll of the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie whom they look upon as the main force to be rallied in the Democratic Front"; another section of the Party have looked "upon the peasantry as nothing but a part of the 'backward petty bourgeoisie masses.'" Both errors have disregarded "the main task of the working class in a colonial country, to develop the peasant movement."² A similar error has been committed by "the other left parties and democratic groups" whose style themselves Marxist and with whom the Communists are ready to work in a United Front. These parties have not understood that "the essence of Marxism lies in the most dominant form of relations of production based on the separation of the producers from the means of production — which in a colonial country with feudal relationship is the monopoly of

² S. Parameswaran, p. 62.

land in the hands of a few feudal and semi-feudal landlords.”³

E. M. S. Namboodripad analyses the Party's main errors in dealing with the agrarian question in the post-war period.⁴

First Stage : —

From August 1945 to the August, 1946 resolutions of the Central Committee. Failure to foresee the coming unrest and discontent among the peasants and consequently the Party “was unable to organise kisan actions to keep pace with the INA demonstrations, the RIN Revolt, the preparation for the All-India Railway Strike, etc.”⁵ The Central Kisan Council was allowed to promise its co-operation with the Congress-sponsored National Planning Committee, thus following a “Legalist-constitutionalist path” instead of a mixed revolutionary method ; but the chief error which was to be “the seed of all subsequent sectarian mistakes in formulating the slogans of agrarian revolution” was “the failure to distinguish strictly between the feudal (rent-and-interest collecting) landlord and the capitalist (surplus-value-appropriating) landlord, the tendency to include even rich peasants in the landlord class.”⁶

Second Stage :—

From the August 1946 resolutions of the Central Committee, to March-April, 1947. The Party adopted the programme of leading and directing the peasants' struggle, but with no co-ordinated plan and the credit for these struggles goes to local initiative. During this period the following

³ Ibid. p. 62.

⁴ E. M. S. Namboodripad, pp. 56-62.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 56-57. Note here and in many other instances to be quoted later how Communists claim to be the instigators of outstanding strikes and rebellions.

⁶ E. M. S. Namboodripad, p. 57.

struggles took place ; the 'Quit Kashmir' against the Maharaja Hari Singh ; Telengana in Hyderabad ; Punnupravayalar in Travancore with the slogan 'End the Diwan's Rule,' 'American Model Constitution into the Arabian Sea ;⁷ Tebhaga in Bengal ; and the struggle in North Malabar where the peasants were led by the Kisan Sabha and the CPI.

The Party accuses itself a failure in exploiting the initiative of the peasant and of linking up their struggle with that of the middle - and working class.⁸

Third Stage :—

March-April, 1947 to December 1947. "The principal character of the mistakes can be put in one word — 'left' sectarianism." And this period was marked by a period of "retreat from the policy of leading struggles," and by realisation that "no kisan struggle can be victorious unless the revolutionary initiative of the kisans is unleashed and kisans helped to set up their own fighting organisations. The campaign for the support of the general democratic movement was thus made almost a substitute for the organisation of the kisans themselves."⁹

Fourth Stage :—

December, 1947 to March, 1950. This period was marked by an "extremely sectarian approach to the peasantry in general that led to the virtual dissolution of the All-India Kisan Sabha making it defunct in practice."¹⁰

Fifth Stage :—

This is the final stage and stretches from March-April, 1950 to April-May, 1951. This period produced two trends,

⁷ The peasants were organised behind the factory workers of Alleppey. This type of organisation is set up as a model.

⁸ In these documents, 'working class' means industrial workers in mills, factories and the like.

⁹ E. M. S. Namboodripad, pp. 59-60.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 61.

one of "continuing the sectarianism of 1948-50 in new forms — 'excluding rich peasants with feudal tails' from the anti-feudal front.... "The other, that of Comrade Joshi and others, "denouncing all militant struggles (including Telengana) as adventurist, interpreting the unity of all the peasantry in such a way as to deny the special revolutionary role of agricultural labour and poor peasants, denying the fact that, on some issues and on some occasions, the rich peasants will go over to the enemy, the denial of the necessity for any illegal mass organisations and partisan units, etc." ¹¹

All five stages have two common features which point out the chief errors and lay the bases for future action; they are :

"(i) On the issue of the objective of agrarian reform, they do not make the strict distinction that it is necessary to make between the parasitical feudal system of production and the capitalist system and hence, instead of the objective of ending the former and of restricting while promoting the latter, they advocate the policy of treating them alike ; (ii) On the issue of leading kisan struggles, they do not advance the basic task of so leading every struggle as to unleash the revolutionary initiative of the kisans to the maximum and help them to set up their own fighting organisations. It was within the framework of this incorrect understanding that the Party shifted its policy from time to time." ¹² But, adds the same author, it would be wrong to look on the Party's post-war activities among the peasants as a series of blunders. This would be to overlook the achievements and experience gained and "to forget the very fact of the revolutionary upsurge among the kisans in the post-war period, to forget the very rapid disillusionment of the mass of peasantry regarding the Congress and its government, to forget the rapid growth of the feeling among the

¹¹ Ibid. p. 61.

¹² Ibid. pp. 61-62.

kisans that this government has to be replaced by one which will satisfy their demands.”¹³ With this historical background we may now examine further details of the agrarian programme.

Chinese Model :—

The *Policy* reviewing past strategy emphasises the erroneousness of thinking that the ‘reforms’ desired by the CPI can be brought about by parliamentary methods alone, and then states that “our main road is already charted out for us” in the doctrine of orthodoxy of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and the example of the Soviet Union and Chinese Democracy. It was wrong, notes the *Policy*, to have thought that “the main weapon in our struggle would be the weapon of general strikes of industrial workers followed by countrywide insurrection as in Russia,” as also was the later theory “that since ours is a semi-colonial country like China, our revolution would develop in the same way as in China, with partisan war of peasantry, as its main weapon.”¹⁴ “After long discussion, running for several months, the Party has now arrived at a new understanding of the correct path for attaining the freedom of the country and the happiness of the people, a path which we do not and cannot name as either Russian or Chinese.”¹⁵ The future *Policy* will take its inspiration from orthodox Marxist doctrine from the Russian and Chinese Revolution, but adopt itself to local peculiarities. What lessons are to be learnt from China? As in China, India’s problem is essentially an agricultural and peasant problem: “We are essentially a colonial country, with a vast majority of our people living on agriculture.” Real freedom means taking away the land from the feudal landlords without compensation. “This anti-feudal task, when fulfilled, alone will mean the real liberation for our country because the main

¹³ Ibid. p.63.

¹⁴ *Policy*, p. 3.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 3.

props of imperialist interests in our country, as they were in China, are the feudal. So, like the Chinese, we have to fight feudalism and imperialism. Our revolution is anti-feudal, anti-imperialist."¹⁶ But there are important differences: in China, Communism had the Liberation Army to give substantial aid; and anti-communists had no good communication, while in India communications are good; the Chinese Communist army could manoeuvre and retreat until it reached Manchuria. "There, with the industrial base in hand, and the great friendly Soviet Union in the rear, the Chinese Liberation Army, free from the possibility of any attack in the rear, rebuilt itself and launched the final offensive which led it to victory. The geographical situation in India in this respect is altogether different."¹⁷ There are other salient points of difference: "Moreover, we must bear in mind that the Chinese Party stuck to the peasant partisan war alone, not out of a principle, but out of sheer necessity."¹⁸ Owing to the nature of the struggle in China the peasants and the Party became separated from the working classes in the cities, but separating peasants from the working classes should not built up into a principle for India. Such an outlook ignores the fact that we have a big working class and that it has a role to play, which can be decisive in our struggle for freedom."¹⁹ In India, then, there must be united action between peasants and workers, the latter acting as the spear-head of the united movement. Thus "The C. C. wishes to convey to comrades this great lesson of history, a lesson which is neither only the Russian path or the Chinese path, but a path of Leninism, applied

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 5. One may speculate if things will be so different with Tibet Communist and Communism very active in Nepal, Burma and Kashmir. The Communist present demand for a large measure of autonomy for Kashmir seems significant.

¹⁸ *Policy*, p. 5.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 6.

to Indian conditions."²⁰ Such a policy will help comrades to understand that the main question is not whether the struggle is to be violent or non-violent. "Such a poser is a poser of Gandhian ideology, which in practice, misleads the masses and is a poser of which we must steer clear. Marxism and history have once for all decided the question for the Party and the people of every country in the world long ago. All action of the masses in defence of their interests to achieve their liberation is sacrosanct. History sanctions all that the people decide to do to clear the lumber-load of decadence and reaction in their path to progress and freedom."²¹ Which is nothing but an application of Communist ethics that everything that helps the Party, violence included, is good: whatever hinders its progress is bad. Whoever stands in its path must be removed, violently if necessary. In this context the *Policy* condemns individual terrorism as frequently practised by Communists in India. Such terrorism is evil, not because violence as such is evil, since the individuals who practice terrorism "may be heroic and selfless and applauded...." still such actions are not permissible "for the simple reason that therein the masses are not in action. Therein, the belief is fostered that the heroes will do the job for the people."²²

(To be continued)

A. Nevett

²⁰ Ibid. p. 7.

²¹ Ibid. p. 7.

EDUCATING FOR CITIZENSHIP

If there are few Catholic lay leaders among us today, men and women who are truly Catholic and real leaders, who, exert a telling influence in Catholic circles and in the various channels of public life, the fault, in our opinion, lies to a large extent in our educational system: we have failed to provide a really complete training for life, and to inculcate in our youth a sense of social responsibility.

With the development of the experimental sciences and of modern industry an increasing emphasis has come to be placed on the utilitarian aspects of education, and training in social competence has been proportionately neglected. It is not Catholic educators alone that are wanting in this matter, of course; others perhaps have to blame themselves even more, for the lack of social mindedness seems to be a general phenomenon. The Vice-President of India referred to this in his recent address to the Banaras Hindu University; Dr. Radakrishnan is reported to have said, "For the task which faces us today we require young men of disciplined enthusiasm and dedicated service, if we are to establish an order which would eliminate social injustice, economic inequalities and other evils of the present system. It is from the universities and schools that we must get a never-ending flow of trained leadership, competent to deal with the complex problems which the future holds for us. We need not only technical competence but also disciplined loyalty." Regretting the lack of this spirit among modern youth, he continued, "The country needs men of spirit and sacrifice and not idlers who fritter away their energies in trivialities." However others may stand in this question of social formation, it is in proportion to the role Catholics can and ought to play in public life, and to the share we have in educating India's youth, that our contribution towards training for citizenship must be. If we do

not take a prompt lead in this matter, we may be sure that anti-social and subversive elements will step in to poison the minds of the young.

How do We Stand ?

If social-mindedness does not become real among Catholics, we shall be guilty of ignoring present-day problems, of failing to apply Catholic principles to their solution, and of allowing key social positions to fall into the hands of Communists and fellow-travellers. How social-minded are we now, exactly ? A set of questions originally proposed to American educationists may be adapted and adopted in order to help us gauge the situation in India:—

How many of our former (University or High School) students who are businessmen are spreading the ideas of the social encyclicals — if they heard about them from us ! — and striving, for instance, to promote cooperation between labour and management ?

How many of them who are lawyers and doctors are using their knowledge to promote stability in the family, the community ?

How many of them who are employees, clerks for instance, who strive to bridge the gap between capital and labour, to combat Communist influence in the unions ?

How many of them are engaged in what we might call extra-professional activity in the civic field, taking part in national and community welfare projects ?

How many of them treat their servants as justice and Christian charity demand ? etc.

Social Formation

The answers to the above questions will surely not be satisfying ; it is good to realise this, yet the realisation is not enough, for social-mindedness cannot be formed overnight. Its acquisition will be the fruit of a constant training that must start in youth, the age of ideals and enthusi-

asm: "Youth has idealism, energy and courage. Our young people are not tied down to settled ways, nor have they experienced the weariness and disillusionment which often follows failure. They bring to problems a fresh and unsullied point of view. They are more easily moulded along patterns dictated by ideals, since they have fewer ingrained prejudices which might militate against such patterns," says Fr. John F. Cronin in *Catholic Social Action*.

We must train youth in our homes and — it is here our immediate concern — in our schools; theirs has been hitherto a largely negative approach to social problems, "educators have failed to recognise that schooling in social concepts and stimulation through social motivation are vital components of a full-rounded education, and education for life." In most of our Catholic institutions, an Indian missionary commented, due importance is given to the teaching of piety, purity, work, discipline, which is all most praiseworthy, but has sufficient attention been paid to the fostering of charity among little children, and of a sense of brotherhood and cooperation, of human dignity and of fairness, among those who are older? We must instill into the young the social sense that widens horizons and destroys self-centredness, the prudence, charity and justice necessary to deal with life's problems.

In a most instructive study on "Youth and the Social Encyclicals" (*The Catholic Educator*, February 1952), Bro. Leo V. Ryan, C. S. V., points out that our task in this connection is to form correct attitudes in our students and train them in the use of criteria for the evaluation of social problems, rather than to supply them with a set of ready-made solutions to individual problems; to lay more stress on study and training rather than on immediate action. Once young people have assimilated the fundamental principles concerning man's dependence on God and his social nature, the dignity of man and of labour, the sacredness of the family and the unity of mankind, they must be encouraged to apply these principles to the problems they are about to face in life.

Official Directives:—

Nor should it be thought that the demand for social education is just another phase of the modern fad of the social sciences ; the Church herself desires that the Christian social formation of our laity should not be delayed until the years of maturity have been reached. The Sacred Congregation of the Council said in a letter to the Bishop of Lille (June 5, 1929) : " And on this subject, in view of a more thorough social Christian formation, and one more adapted to youth, the Sacred Congregation suggests that, in the various clubs for young men and boys and educational institutes, some social education suitable to the capacities of young people should be given, as is already done with excellent results in certain dioceses. The effect of such instruction will be not only to protect the young from the errors to which they are exposed, but also to make them realise the beneficent activity of the Church in the social sphere."

But how are we to impart social education ? The syllabus of studies is largely beyond our control, and the timetable is crowded enough already. What then is to be done ?

The immediate solution — and indeed the fundamental one — specially in the schools, would seem to be not a special course in social science but rather the teaching of the usual subjects with a social bias. Fr. Louis J. Twomey S. J., of New Orleans' Loyola University, has the following remarks to make : " With few exceptions, such perhaps as mathematics and the physical sciences, there is no course in the curriculum from the lowest grades through graduate and professional schools, that cannot be made to serve the purpose of social indoctrination. This end is to be gained not by weakening the contents of the course, but by focusing the student's mind on the method whereby he can use the factual and cultural knowledge acquired from the course better to equip himself to make his proportionate contribution to the society of men in which he lives. Thus will be built up social attitudes to make the student aware

that God did not create him to be an isolated individual, but a member of society from which, as a member, he is to receive certain benefits and towards which he has certain obligations."

The chief subjects taught at school and college have a social bearing. Take religion and morals — do not the ten commandments provide a comprehensive social code whose implications can be explained to students, and can they not also learn the connection between the Gospel lessons and social problems ? Then there is history — how many occasions does it not provide to expose the dangers and horrors occasioned by selfishness, greed and injustice in high places, and to exalt noble deeds too ! Again, in the study of literature, the lives of the great lovers of mankind, and the literary master-pieces inspired by this love, can be placed before our pupils.

Outside the classroom, school organizations like the Sodality and the Boy Scouts can help very much in creating a sense of social responsibility, whilst the praiseworthy enterprise of some schools in starting social service leagues shows that civic activity is not entirely beyond the powers of schoolboys ; social virtues like leadership, cooperation, fair-play and self-control can be actively fostered and developed on the sports field ; an attractive and well-managed bulletin-board can be of great value in imparting, in a popular fashion, information and instruction on social topics.

In the case of older students there is more scope for social education both in the classroom, in subjects such as civics and sociology, and outside it. At the College level great fruit may be obtained by founding Christian associations and forming study-circles, as was suggested by Pope Pius XI. Organisations like the Sodality, the Legion of Mary, Catholic Students' Unions, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, can be valuable means of promoting social education and the social apostolate ; the launching of cooperative enterprises and social service leagues, as well as the fostering of Catholic social action through existing national and secular

movements can be more easily attempted at the higher levels of education. Admittedly, more than one difficulty will have to be overcome, and more than one disappointment to be bravely disregarded, but we cannot shirk our duty to youth and society.

Obligation and Opportunity

On Catholic parents, on our teachers, and on those who direct their activities, rests a great responsibility that is also a glorious opportunity, to educate the children of today so as to make of them the citizens of tomorrow, the pillars of the Church, the builders of the nation. May the following words of the Bishops of Quebec, in a Joint Pastoral Letter, serve to arouse them to apostolic action in this field: "Unless teachers take care to give a sufficient doctrinal preparation on this subject, unless they direct their pupils towards the splendid realities of the generous life which they should lead, our young people will easily withdraw themselves from such a life, being more attracted by an ambitious and hedonistic egoism, soon ready to sacrifice everything for the success of a lucrative career which is socially useless if not evil. The adult carries over into life the habits of thought and action which he acquired and with which he was inspired during his youth. Consequently all those who have the responsibility of educating young people must be preoccupied with their social formation."

The Plenary Council of Bangalore is no less insistent on the urgent need of training youths to Catholic Action at school (No. 149) and to civic action (No. 244) and on the necessity of fostering social action among all (No. 236, sqq.) These decrees should not go unheeded in the present-day circumstances of India.

J. Correia- Afonso

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